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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAMAKO 000594

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SUBJECT: ALL IN THE FAMILY: LEGISLATIVE POLITICS IN KIDAL

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Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson, Embassy Bamako, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Summary: Mali's most ambitious political leaders are approaching the upcoming legislative elections with an eye toward the next round of presidential elections in 2012 (reftel). A different power game, however, is playing out in the northern region of Kidal where members of the Alliance for the Democracy and Change (ADC) are attempting cash in on their notoriety as rebels. Two ADC members have teamed up with one of Mali's strongest pro-President Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) political parties, the Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA), to run for the National Assembly. A third ADC leader, aligned with Mali's other major pro-ATT party the Union for the Republic in Democracy (URD), is also running for an Assembly seat. Within the city limits of Kidal, meanwhile, the powerful Intallah family reportedly paid an official to "lose" the registration documents of a rival candidate to help secure Alghabass ag Intallah's re-election to the Assembly. The rival candidate was reinstated on May 31 after a mid-sized demonstration in Kidal and interventions by Kidal's Governor, the Minister of Territorial Administration and Mali's Constitutional Court. End Summary.

Rebel Candidates

2.(C) Three leaders of the Tuareg rebel ADC are running for National Assembly seats in Mali's upcoming July 1 legislative elections. ADC spokesperson Ahmada ag Bibi is running on the powerful and pro-ATT Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA) ticket from his home constituency of Abeibera. He is running against one other candidate who has the endorsement of the opposition Rally for Mali (RPM) party. To pave the way for ag Bibi, ADC leaders reportedly convinced the current National Assembly Deputy from Abeibera, Ibya ag Sidi, to pass up another term in office.

3.(C) In Tessalit, two ADC leaders are competing for the Assembly seat vacated by Baye ag Hamdi, the ADC's Communications Secretary. Seeking to replace ag Hamdi on the ADEMA ticket is Cheick ag Aoussa, the ADC's Secretary for Internal Relations. Aoussa is a cousin of the Intallah family and also related to Ahmada ag Bibi. He is running against the ADC's finance secretary, Deity ag Sidimou. Ag Sidimou is representing the URD, Mali's other major pro-ATT political party. He is also extremely well funded due in large part to his implication in northern Mali's highly lucrative business of illicit trafficking. One Kidal Tuareg dismissed Sidimou's role in the ADC, stating that the only finances he ever really managed were his own. Ag Sidimou is believed to have the endorsement of the mayor of Tessalit which, in combination with the funds at his disposition and

support from the URD, makes him a formidable candidate. Also running for Tessalit's Assembly seat are Ag Diknane Baye and Attaher ag Iknane. Attaher ag Iknane serves officially as an advisor to ATT but appears to have little actual influence or contact with the President.

Intallah Intrigues in Kidal

4.(U) Mohamed ag Intallah, the current Deputy from Tin-essako, is running for re-election unopposed. Incidentally, with 147 Assembly seats up for grabs throughout Mali, Tin-essako is the only race with just one candidate. The Intallah family allegedly succeeded in discouraging potential rivals in Tin-essako from challenging the oldest of three Intallah brothers.

5.(C) Mohamed's younger brother, Alghabass ag Intallah, is seeking to hold his Assembly seat from Kidal. Both brothers belong to the ADEMA party. Unlike his brother in Tin-essako, Alghabass is facing five challengers. Four of these are long-shot candidates. The fifth challenger, Zied ag Hamzata, stands a legitimate chance of unseating Alghabass. Hamzata represents the opposition RPM party. His campaign registration documents, however, mysteriously disappeared just hours before the filing deadline in Kidal. Rumors in Kidal claim that one of the Assembly candidates, presumed to be Alghabass, paid a local official perhaps as much as USD 20,000 to "lose" the documents. Oddly enough, a remarkably similar event occurred in 2004 when Hamzata tried to run against the youngest Intallah brother, Atiyoub ag Intallah, for Kidal's mayorship. Whoever attempted to suppress Hamzata's registration for the legislative elections,

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however, apparently failed to realize that copies of the documents were also submitted to the Ministry of Territorial Administration, thereby proving that Hamzata had indeed submitted his candidacy prior to the official deadline.

5.(C) When the list of candidates from Kidal appeared without Hamzata's name, several of his supporters converged on the office of Kidal's Governor, Alhamdou ag Iliyen. Outraged by the brazen attempt by an unseen hand to block Hamzata from running for office yet again, members of Hamzata's Taghatmelet tribe, who had previously supported Intallah (from the Ifogas tribe), also apparently petitioned the Governor to intervene. During a May 31 conversation with the Embassy, Gov. Iliyen described the situation as discouraging and said that Minister of Territorial Administration Kafougouna Kone had telephoned Hamzata personally to express the Malian government's concern. During a late night meeting on May 31, Mali's Constitutional Court reinstated Hamzata's candidacy.

Comment: Rebels Turned Politicians

6.(C) ADC leaders' interest in politics over rebellion is clearly a positive sign. Unfortunately, both Ahmada ag Bibi (who is likely to win in Abeibera) and Dayti ag Sidimou (who is probably the favorite in Tessalit) are implicated in illicit trafficking tied to the former GSPC and AQIM. If, however, the two Intallah brothers' attendance record for National Assembly sessions is matched by the incoming batch of Tuareg Deputies, Bamako sightings of ag Bibi and ag Sidimou are likely to be few and far between. Although the Constitutional Court made some questionable decisions regarding certain legislative candidacies (septel), reinstating Hamzata was the correct move. Given the Intallah's grip on power in the Kidal region, however, Hamzata's campaign faces an uphill battle.
McCulley